DANCE PERSPECTIVES

PROPERTY OF THE
LIBRARY OF THE
MAR 31 1959
WOMEN'S COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

LEV IVANOV

Caricature by NICHOLAS LEGAT

DANCE PERSPECTIVES

Writings on Lev Ivanov

by YURY SLONIMSKY

with a biography of Ivanov in excerpts

from M. Borisoglebsky

Translated and edited with annotations

by ANATOLE CHUJOY

Cover designed by Karl Leabo
The Bolshoi Ballet in "Swan Lake"

Copyright 1959 by Dance Perspectives, Inc.

SPRING 1959 2

CONTENTS

LEV IVANOV

Page

From *Materials for the History of Russian Ballet* by M. Borisoglebsky 5

From Masters of the Ballet by Yury Slonimsky 8
Notes on Source Material 38
List of Ballets Staged by Ivanov in St. Petersburg . . 41

From *P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of his Time* by Yury Slonimsky 42

Concluding Remarks by the Translator 56

Productions of Ivanov Ballets in New York 59

Issued quarterly by Dance Perspectives, Inc., 1801 East 26th Street, Brooklyn 29, N. Y.
Subscription: $5.00 a year. Single copies: $1.50

DANCE PERSPECTIVES
A. J. PISCHL, SELMA JEANNE COHEN, Editors
SHEPPARD BLACK, Assistant Editor

IN PERSPECTIVE

Of all ballets in the contemporary repertory, *Swan Lake* is probably the most popular. And of the whole of *Swan Lake,* Act 2 is the one most often thought to represent the very essence of beauty in Russian ballet. Yet the choreographer of this masterpiece is one of the least known personalities in the annals of recent dance history. The reasons for this neglect, along with ample evidence to turn the tide toward the recognition of the genius of Lev Ivanov, are set forth in the following works by Yury Slonimsky.

Slonimsky was born in St. Petersburg in 1902 and graduated from the Leningrad Law School in 1924. He translated Noverre's *Letters on Dancing and Ballets* in 1921 and lectured on the romantic ballet, publishing in 1927, the results of his research on *La Sylphide* and *Giselle.* From 1932 to 1936, Slonimsky headed the Department of Methodology and lectured on the analysis of ballet performances at the Leningrad State Choreographic School. He is now on the staff of the Moscow Choreographic School. In addition to the two books from which these translations are drawn, Slonimsky was a contributor to *Classics of Choreography* and the author of a number of ballet scenarios. He also wrote the preface to the first edition of Agrippina Vaganova's *Fundamentals of the Classic Dance* (1934).

Yury Slonimsky is today one of the foremost critics in the Soviet Union. His viewpoint, to be sure, is conditioned by the ideology of the state in which he lives. But his analysis of the character of Ivanov, and of the musicality and structure of Ivanov's ballets, is revealing and significant even to our "bourgeois" mentalities.

We are greatly indebted to Anatole Chujoy, editor of *Dance News,* for making these works of Slonimsky, and of the theatrical historian M. Borisoglebsky, available for the first time in English. The parentheses marked A.C. in the text have been added by the translator, as have all parenthetical first names of persons. Numbered footnotes, which refer to source material, appear at the end of the first Slonimsky article. In the light of Mr. Chujoy's comments, Ivanov's position is established not only with reference to the Russian scene, as Slonimsky places it, but in relation to subsequent developments in Western Europe and America.

Л. И. Иванов.

Lev Ivanov (*Materials for the History of Russian Ballet*)

Lev Ivanov

Excerpts from *Materials for the History of Russian Ballet*
by M. Borisoglebsky, Vol. I, Leningrad, 1938

Lev Ivanov's name was entered in the register of the St. Petersburg Imperial Theatre School as "the illegitimate son of spinster Tio Adamova." At the age of 11 months the boy had been placed in an orphan asylum from which he was taken by his mother some two years later, on November 25, 1837.

Available information states that until he was eight years of age Ivanov lived with a merchant family, whose name is not given. Later he was placed in a private boarding school where he remained two years. Following that, he was accepted as a student by the St. Petersburg Theatre School.

During his first years in the School, Ivanov revealed an outstanding aptitude for music. Instead of being encouraged by the school authorities, however, he was often reprimanded and punished for his extraordinary love of music. His musical memory was so great that, after hearing a melody only once, he could play it from memory almost without mistakes. The director of the Musical Society,* who heard Ivanov play, was impressed with his phenomenal musical aptitude, but did not succeed in obtaining for him a release from the Theatre School. He spoke of Ivanov as a musician of genius.

Felix Kchessinski (famous character dancer, father of ballerina

* The Musical Society was an organization of musicians, professional and lay, under the patronage of the Imperial Court. The Society had much to say about musical life in St. Petersburg. A.C.

Copyright 1959 by Anatole Chujoy

Mathilda Kchessinska, A.C.) relates in his memoirs the following episode about Ivanov's musical talent:

"Our rehearsals were very seldom conducted to piano accompaniment. Usually there was scraping on two fiddles by Etikson and Rosenfeld (staff accompanists at the time, A.C.) Etikson played only the second fiddle. Once Rosenfeld did not come to a rehearsal. Lev Ivanov calmly sat down to the piano and played the entire ballet from the beginning to the end, as if he had the music before him."

Stubbornly and with ill will, the School authorities tried to cure Ivanov of his musical habit. Fedorov (head of the Ballet School) threatened to "let him rot for his uncontrollable inclination toward music."

In 1852, Ivanov was graduated from the School into the corps de ballet with a salary of 360 rubles (approximately $180, at the time, A.C.) a year. He made his debut in *La Fille Mal Gardée* and was successful, but Jules Perrot, who did not care for Russians, stubbornly kept Ivanov in the corps. Only two years later did he succeed in advancing from the corps. He finally solidified his position after he replaced Marius Petipa in (Arthur) Saint-Léon's *Mariquita* as the Chief of the Gypsy Camp.*

When Marius Petipa was appointed ballet master-in-chief, Ivanov assumed the position of premier danseur and mime. In 1885 he was appointed second ballet master.

The lack of recognition of Ivanov's talent by the Theatre's authorities was echoed by Sergei Khudekov in *The History of Dance* when he wrote:

"Ivanov was considered of great usefulness. He never spoiled a part, but also he never made any of his parts great. Everywhere he was a proper, elegant partner-dancer, always trying to keep in the shade . . . He was very nearsighted and he used to admit that this defect seriously interfered with his work on the stage . . ."

Ivanov staged most of his ballets in collaboration with others, mainly with Petipa. This collaboration was not a result of his need of assistance, but of his position, which made him dependent on

* Available material on Saint-Léon's work does not include a ballet entitled *Mariquita*. Cyril W. Beaumont mentions in his *Complete Book of Ballets* that when Petipa was suddenly taken ill Ivanov "had to deputise for him in *La Vivandière*," but the cast of characters of *La Vivandière* does not include a Chief of a Gypsy Camp. A.C.

Petipa. It must be noted that most of Ivanov's ballets were credited to Petipa whose name, because he occupied the post of ballet master-in-chief, had to be printed in the program of every ballet. Ivanov suffered a great deal from this unfairness. Petipa injected himself into Ivanov's work for the sole reason that this would give him the official right to be called choreographer of Ivanov's ballets. Very often this interference spoiled the ballets.

All the finest parts of *Swan Lake* belong to Ivanov. The entire *Nutcracker* was staged without Petipa, who was ill at the time.

Ivanov was one of the greatest teachers and choreographers of the nineteenth century. He is a brilliant representative of the old classic school.

Lev Ivanov as a young man (*Masters of the Ballet*)

Lev Ivanov 1834-1901

by YURY SLONIMSKY
From *Masters of the Ballet,* Leningrad, 1937

Second ballet master, rehearsing old ballets with the dancers; silent shadow of Petipa; a planet in the orbit of the sun and genius of Russian choreography—this is all one learns about Lev Ivanov from the few dozen pre-revolutionary publications which pretend to relate the history of the St. Petersburg ballet.

At best one can just about manage to extract from these books and articles some scant information about Ivanov's service in the theatre and some praise for his disposition. Official historians, blinded by the name of Petipa, have passed by and forgotten this great and original master.*

Weakened, lazy, passively contemplative, unfit for struggle, incapable either of breaking loose from the stale atmosphere of the Imperial Theatre or of turning to his own advantage his proximity to the Imperial Court, Lev Ivanov lived and created in the St. Petersburg ballet almost like a "serf."

"He was a very gentle, kind person, who never liked to speak to his superiors about himself. He never troubled anyone about himself, never tried to gain anything for himself . . . It seemed as if Ivanov had given himself up as hopeless."[1]

His diary bears witness to this observation. In his senile, trem-

* A curious evaluation of Ivanov is given by Sergei Khudekov (a contemporary balletomane, critic, editor of the *Petersburg Gazette,* author of the four-volume *The History of Dance,* A.C.) who had been a witness of the entire artistic career of Ivanov. Using his rights of an eye-witness, he attempts to prove Ivanov's lack of talent, maintaining in particular, that Ivanov barely participated in the creation of *The Nutcracker.* See S. Khudekov, *The History of Dance,* 1917, Vol. IV, p. 172.

bling handwriting and without realizing it himself, he mentions on nearly every page the basic character trait, which played a fatal role in his destiny.

"Being modest and shy I did not dare to decline . . ." "Knowing my weak character, I never expected to be regisseur . . ."[2]

Nearly of the same age as Petipa, a graduate of the St. Petersburg Theatre School, Lev Ivanov worked on the stage more than half a century. He began his career together with the last stars of the romantic ballet, (Carlotta) Grisi, (Fanny) Elssler, (Amalia) Ferraris, etc.*

"Like a good soldier, I passed through all the ranks of the service, i.e., I was a corps de ballet dancer, a coryphé†, a first

* He was graduated from the school in 1850. (According to the more authoritative M. Borisoglebsky, he was graduated in 1852. A.C.)

† In the Russian Imperial Ballet hierarchy, a coryphé was a position between corps de ballet and soloist. According to tradition coryphés normally danced in groups of eight or six; soloists were not required to dance in groups of more than four; ballerinas and premiers danseurs danced only pas seuls and pas de deux. A.C.

Lev Ivanov with an unidentified partner in Russian Dance from THE HUMPBACKED HORSE, St. Petersburg, 1864 (*Masters of the Ballet*)

Alexandra Kemmerer, who danced as Ivanov's partner in numerous ballets at the Maryinsky Theatre from 1862 to 1879 (Harvard Theatre Collection)

dancer, played character roles, was a dance teacher, and finally ballet master," he writes of himself.[3]

His entire career is a chain of events and circumstances, favorable or unfavorable, but always independent of his will. "I advanced by accidents," he reminisces. "For two years I was in the depths of the corps de ballet . . . The ballerina (Tatiana) Smirnova persuaded me to dance a pas de deux with her . . . The debut was quite successful . . . From then on (Jules) Perrot began to give me little bits and various pas . . ."[4]

His promotion to leading roles was equally accidental.

I became a mime and *jeune premier* also by accident . . . On the day of the performance Petipa sent a note saying that he was ill. The regisseur suggested that I substitute for him . . . Another time I played Phoebus (in *Esmeralda,* A.C.) because Petipa reported his indisposition in the evening, before the very performance. Subsequently I played several other parts, also extemporaneously."[5]

Also by accident, Ivanov began to do production work in the 1880's, during the period of depression in ballet and confusion in

Petipa's leadership. Were it not for this "time of unrest" in ballet—when stifling reaction hovered over the Imperial theatres and over Petipa, the ballet's wavering leader—Ivanov, perhaps, would never have been given his first production. The aging Petipa, who was instructor, choreographer, and head of the company, needed an assistant for preliminary work on his ballets. Obviously it was better to choose a "regular fellow" from the company—a modest and obedient person—rather than invite someone from abroad and run the risk of rearing a competitor.

"In 1885 I was made second ballet master," Ivanov notes this important event in his diary. Where Petipa would have shouted triumphantly: "Finally I attained my goal, forced them to recognize my talent," Ivanov writes about himself as about an object: "I was made ballet master." Also characteristic of him is his evaluation of this big event. "To be a ballet master is not very peaceful, but still it is better than being regisseur."[6]

In the opinion of Petipa, the second ballet master must be only an obedient executor.

It can be understood that in these conditions Ivanov is entrusted with productions only by chance. Now Petipa is occupied with the composition of a ballet for a court fête, now he has to leave urgently for guest appearances in Moscow, now again he does not feel well because of family trouble, now he is suddenly taken ill. At such times Ivanov takes over the staging of the ballet regardless of how far it has advanced.

He begins to work readily and when the job is done he demonstrates it to his teacher and boss, who unceremoniously edits and changes the production, not forgetting, at the same time, to place his own name on the poster.

This method of Petipa's participation in Ivanov's productions remains in force during the entire length of their joint service in the theatre, often undeservedly abasing and depreciating Ivanov's creative work.

"Although Ivanov was listed in the roster as second ballet master, next to Petipa, the latter paid him little heed. Frankly speaking, he turned over to Ivanov only the lesser productions on which he, himself, for some reason did not want to work. Petipa placed his name under compositions of other ballet masters although he participated only as an artistic director, i.e., looked over the finished product and

made his suggestions. This was particularly the case with Ivanov's productions."[7]

Ivanov had become accustomed to Petipa's unceremonious interference and "co-authorship" to such an extent that he inured himself to the thought that he was "worse than Petipa." "I don't possess the kind of talent that Petipa does," he states in his diary and even preaches meekness and modesty to others: "Don't be too proud, don't consider yourself better than others, be more modest."[8]

We emphasize Ivanov's lack of confidence in his own powers, his constant looking back to his sole arbiter, Petipa, so that the reader will understand why the ballets of a person, who was doomed to be a hack creator, always had some defects.

The first big work of Ivanov was the revival of Jean Dauberval's *La Fille Mal Gardée* with new music by Peter Ludwig Hertel (1885).*

With this performance Ivanov passes his test in three subjects. In the dance-action scenes, preserved from the remarkable ballet master of the eighteenth century and edited by Jules Perrot, Ivanov demonstrates that he is in full command of the traditions of the pantomime dance. He stages this ballet (which had been changed in Berlin into a sentimental, comic pastorale) as a brilliant dance spectacle, which gives him the right to the title of master of divertissement numbers. Finally, and this is the most important thing from the point of view of the directors of the Imperial Theatres and of Marius Petipa, he passes the test (although not "with honors") in the elimination of sharp angles and social accents in his staging of *La Fille Mal Gardée*—a work which is the rarest reflection in ballet of the impending class struggle of the French Revolution of 1789.

The next production of Ivanov is *The Haarlem Tulip* (1887). The limited success of this ballet is due to the bad music by Baron B. Schel, the banality of the dramatically weak scenario and the especially unfavorable conditions at the theatre, since the Imperial Ballet at that time was going through a sharp crisis.

"The fashion of the season"—the invasion of Italian ballerinas

* The music of the original production of *La Fille Mal Gardée* in 1786 was by several unidentified composers. In the 1820's the French composer François Joseph Hérold reworked the musical material, added to it some of his compositions and arranged the first known piano score of the ballet. In the Sixties the German composer Peter Ludwig Hertel wrote a new score based on the material available to him, including that of Hérold. A.C.

Anna Johansson in the role of Emma in THE HAARLEM TULIP (*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

whose technical virtuosity was looked upon as the chief and only value of the performance—remained unassimilated by Ivanov. He stages a ballet as he was taught by his predecessors, the masters of the romantic ballet: the imaginatively-lyric realm of ghosts, emotionally-musing duets, and somewhat coarse, but not unhumorous, pseudo-Dutch dances. Such an approach to production was obviously not modern. The Italian ballerinas expected from the ballet master something entirely different. They wanted sonorous, brilliant adagios set to rhythmically primitive music, which would set off their brilliant technical tricks, loud circus-like codas, full of sharp jumps and endless turns, variations of sparkling, forceful, flashingly-effective movements in which half-tones and gentle nuances could only be a hindrance.

That is why the unceremonious ballerinas, beginning almost with the second performance, interpolated in *The Haarlem Tulip* their own imported effective numbers, and the obedient Ivanov began to rehash his compositions.

* * *

It is not part of our task to analyze all the works by Ivanov, works that have been buried and forgotten because of the low

quality of ballet masters who attempted to revive his ballets and the imperfections of various aspects of his productions.

We shall devote our attention to two of his productions, *The Nutcracker* (1892) and *Swan Lake* (1894-95).

Like all the other ballets, *The Nutcracker* reaches Ivanov by accident and with a delay. In February, 1891, (Peter) Tchaikowsky received a commission to compose an opera-ballet performance (the two-act ballet *The Nutcracker* and the one-act opera *Iolante*). The theme of *The Nutcracker* was selected by the director of the Imperial Theatres, Ivan A. Vsevolojsky, who liked it very much.

On March 9 Tchaikowsky received from Marius Petipa a full working scenario with specific demands regarding the music of every number. But Petipa could not immediately mark out the principles of the construction of the production and vacillated for a long time. In his archives are notes which indicate that at the beginning he had endeavored to make a running intrigue the basis of the production. He did not intend to limit the story to the first act. Among his papers is the first draft of *The Nutcracker* which ends with the panorama of a forest into which Masha wandered in her dream.[9]

Scene from Act 1 of THE NUTCRACKER, 1892 (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*)

What is now the dramatically weak second act is not in this draft.

But on February 29 Petipa's hesitations unexpectedly come to an end. Apparently he had confided his doubts to the director of the Imperial Theatres, Vsevolojsky, who rejected the first draft and demanded the enrichment of the ballet with more dances. The scenario of the second act and outlines of all the dances appear on this day. Petipa contentedly concludes the libretto with the following triumphant remark: "J'ai affranchi . . . j'ai écrit cela . . . C'est très bon."[10]

Tchaikowsky could not say that. "He liked the plot of *The Nutcracker* very little."[11] The reference to the most interesting writer E(rnst) T(heodor) Hoffmann from whom the plot was borrowed, is unconvincing. In fact, the episodes in *The Nutcracker* were taken, not from Hoffmann, but from Dumas, who had made use of Hoffmann's plot. But in Petipa's treatment the plot is colored in un-Hoffmann-like hues, boiled down to an excuse for dancing in the first act and is entirely absent from the second, where it is finally vulgarized by the atmosphere of the Candy Kingdom—pink-colored sea, jelly-like shores, etc.

In the process of work, Tchaikowsky little by little begins to be reconciled to the plan.

Especially unattractive to him is the second act, which has no development and growth and about which he grieves: "I feel a complete impossibility to reproduce musically 'Konfitürenburg'" (The Candy Kingdom).[12]

He doubts the success and usefulness of his work on the music for *The Nutcracker* and is for this reason ready to decline the commission. But Vsevolojsky sends Tchaikowsky a letter in which he transmits to him the praise of the Imperial family, calling the forthcoming production "the hit of the season."[13]

This encourages Tchaikowsky. However, having finished the second act of the ballet, he still feels no satisfaction. "The ballet is infinitely worse than *The Sleeping Beauty*. I have no doubt about this," he writes on June 25, 1891.[14] The composer does not feel the unity and sincerity of his creation in this ballet. Apparently, he forces himself to write the music. "Suppose it will turn out that . . . *The Nutcracker* is poor stuff?"[15] he writes a short while before the beginning of the rehearsals of the ballet.

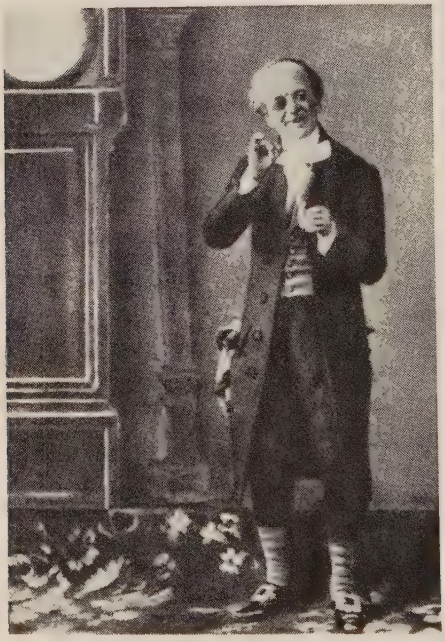
Qualitatively Tchaikowsky's music for *The Nutcracker* is uneven. The first act, in which Tchaikowsky used a symphonic method

of composition, is a deeply expressive treatment of its images; is full of superb, meaningful music, which sounds ironic when it deals with the older people (Grossvater Galop) and impressionistic in the scenes with Drosselmeyer and with the battle of the mice.

The second act does not continue the impressionistic line and unexpectedly ends with a witty, colorful divertissement, which is distinguished from the traditional "dansantes" numbers only by the quality of the music.[16]

Apparently Tchaikowsky himself, deprived of support from the co-authors of the ballet, and, especially, having entered into an intense conflict of opinion with the ballet spectator, could not assume a definite stand in *The Nutcracker* and wavered between the conservative tastes of the public, the insistent demands of Petipa and the richest rise in his creative power during that period.

We call the attention of the reader to these facts in order to note the deep contradictions and the fragmentation of the musical material which Ivanov received in ready-made form when Petipa was taken ill and had to interrupt the preparations for the ballet. It is important for us to emphasize that in *The Nutcracker* two masters



Timothy Stoukolkin as Drosselmeyer in THE NUTCRACKER, 1892 (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*)

THE NUTCRACKER, the Battle of the Mice (*Materials for the History of Russian Ballet*)

met, shackled and burdened by the unsuccessful plan of the production, which Ivanov was not able to overcome.

The difficulty of the production of *The Nutcracker* lay, firstly, in the badly balanced, unresolved plan of the ballet and, secondly, to a certain extent, in the contradictions of the then existing crisis in the Imperial Ballet.*

We must resolutely reject the version of M(odest) I(llyich) Tchaikowsky, the composer's brother, that the music and the ballet were ruined by Ivanov.†

Let us take as an example a few fragments from *The Nutcracker* in the production of Ivanov, which are excellent compositions; such are "The Dance of the Snowflakes" (Act I), "The Dance of the Bouffons" (Trepak) and "The Chinese Dance" (Act 2).

In "The Dance of the Snowflakes" Ivanov's entire attention is directed toward the emotionally-illustrative reproduction of a snow storm. The movements are very simple and their variety is not great. In this Ivanov's production materially differs from the current (Moscow, A.C.) stage variant. In his movements, there is not a single detail which stands isolated from the general plan of the scene. But the very character of the movements and the inventiveness of the elaborate groupings recreate a vision of a snow storm with its fluffy, soft snowflakes and melting tufts of snow.

* We are certain that to assure a long stage life to the score of *The Nutcracker* the music must be re-assembled in accordance with the demands of a unified dramaturgy, including the music and the plot.

† "In this ballet, in addition to the plot which is too far removed from the ballet tradition, the fault was also to a great extent with the ballet master," writes M(odest) Tchaikowsky in *The Life of P. I. Tchaikowsky,* Vol. III, Moscow, 1902, page 579.

THE NUTCRACKER, the Dance of the Snowflakes, 1892 (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*)

We quote in excerpts a description of this scene given by A(kim) Volynsky:

"The snowflakes tremble in the light wind, gliding out of the wings in short lines of three dancers each, dressed in white tunics with downy ornaments on their heads and snowflakes in their hands. Continuously interweaving, they cover the stage with varied figures —circles, stars, straight lines, now parallel, now intersecting.

"The dances, light, with pas de basque and small jumps, present a mosaic of designs, blossoming out one from the other. Some of the dancers form a huge cross with a circle of other dancers passing inside the cross (probably in the centre of the cross, A.C.). The straight lines rush in one direction while the closed circle moves to the opposite side. In front of this marvelous group eight more snowflakes weave a design over the entire width of the stage with barely noticeable jumps, more properly with rhythmic rises on half toe. This is one of the most beautiful details of the production.

"Then comes the figure consisting of two vertical lines (up and

down stage, A.C.) running parallel and joined on top (i.e., up stage, A.C.) by a third one, to form the shape of an inverted U. The joining line consists of four rows of dancers, while each of the side lines consists of two rows of dancers.

"The dance continues all the time with pas de basque alternating with small jumps on one foot. But now the dancers in the upper row join hands and make a wide general circle, and the vertical lines break into parts which rush one after another in smaller circles in preparation for the penultimate moment of the scene: a white dancing star. The star trembles and out of it stream brilliant rays . . . In the final coda, the snow storm whirls in a dancing chaos which forms into a huge group of a pyramidal design. The snowflakes die down in a snow-drift, lulled to sleep by the blizzard."

The power of Ivanov's imaginative thinking in this dance is worthy of our attention, and one may only regret that now it is already impossible to recall and to show many of the details comprising this talented composition, which could compete with the current (Moscow, A.C.) production.

The defects of Ivanov's compositions are also noticeable to us. Thus the confectionary elements in Vsevolojsky's costumes obligated him to prettiness in the poses. Ivanov was unable to stage the dance so that it would coincide in its movements with Tchaikowsky's complicated orchestration.

But this does not detract from the basic value of Ivanov's work, especially if one takes into consideration that until this day none of the subsequent ballet masters have succeeded in creating a work which would be equal in every respect to Tchaikowsky's music.

The "Chinese Dance" and the "Dance of the Bouffons" (Trepak) of Act 2 have an entirely different character. The first is entirely in the tradition of an eighteenth century "chinoiserie": it is a copy of the innumerable graceful statuettes of Chinamen, nodding their heads and thrusting out their arms with pointing index fingers.

Such was also the character of the "prescribed" music.*

The fast dance of the Chinese girls on pointes (two girls with the ensemble), who preserved their statuette-like appearance, is in-

* "Type chinois, clochettes, etc.," notes Petipa. Petipa's archives, file "The Nutcracker."

terrupted by separate grotesque jumps which are accented by similar jumps in the music.*

The "Dance of the Bouffons" is probably the strongest dance fragment in Ivanov's choreography. The male soloist, accompanied by a group of male dancers, skillfully working in big wheeling circles, displayed movements which seemed at the time acrobatic. The sharpness of the poses, precise folk-dance bravura accelerating in tempo, jumps in a kaleidoscope of squatting movements (the small jumps with knees bending and unbending of the Russian prysiadka, A.C.) —all created a dance which is unquestionably worthy of attention even in our days.

One must mention another dance in Ivanov's production of *The Nutcracker*: the pas de deux in Act 2.

The adagio and the girl's variation in this duet are musical masterpieces. The cantilena of the adagio remarkably, expressively and intensely transmits the rise and fall of the melodic line, the rise and fall of the passionate, compact sound wave. But seventy-four measures of such a complex cantilena, especially if one considers the still forthcoming big variation and long coda, presented physical difficulties for the ballerina.†

Antonietta Del'Era, the guest artist from Berlin, who obligingly agreed to grace with her participation "this totally insignificant pas de deux"[17] was least of all interested in the musical structure of the piece, which only hampered her. The tastes of the "cultured" habitués of the theatre, one of whom evaluated Tchaikowsky's music as completely insignificant, were also not conducive to experiments, which were called forth by the necessity of building the dance on structurally-unusual music.

These circumstances played a fatal part in the setting of the pas de deux: it is half-hearted and compromising. Individual lyric sonorities in the movements of the adagio (e.g., successfully incorporated lifts) alternate with tricks (e.g., the progress of the ballerina

* In the current production by V(asili) Vainonen the "Chinese Dance" is a variation on the theme of Lev Ivanov's production.

† The physical difficulty is so serious that one must either make a cut or, as do all ballet masters, introduce into the dance several male partners whose participation make it easier for the ballerina to execute the number.

Antonietta Del'Era (Harvard Theatre Collection)

on a moving track) and with florid embellishments, which obscure the basic thought.

* * *

The muse of Ivanov is chiefly lyric, visionary and elegiac. As years go by, Ivanov, a day-dreamer and idealist in life, timid and submissive in his job, feels ever sharper his loneliness which drives him to solitude, makes him estranged even in the society of theatrical colleagues.

These personal moods gradually become the most pronounced intonations of his creative power.

As we leaf through Ivanov's diary, we see how the smile gradually disappears from his face, how the gay, youthful diversions to which he devotes much space in his diary and the simple delights of love, are succeeded by concentrated reflections about himself, about art, about melancholy doubts in his creative power, and in people. He is perturbed more than ever, observing how his beloved art of the ballet loses its power over the spectator, how it is being deprived of expressiveness. "My young colleagues, love your art as ardently as I have loved it."

Thus, suddenly, there breaks through the peaceful frame of the epic narrative of his diary a sincere and painful cry.

"Your cold and careless attitude toward art always has and still does surprise me. You are not at all interested in your profession. You are not artists, but mannequins. You rehearse somehow reluctantly, lazily, without carefully considering your work. That is why you remain like this in the performance. And from this our common cause suffers."[18]

Everything crumbles away under his eyes. Old age, illness are approaching; he is suffocating in the atmosphere of the St. Petersburg ballet, his indignation is aroused by people whom he lovingly nurtured in the school, never thinking that they would become mannequins. He is tormented by the necessity of a stubborn struggle for the right to create, a struggle of which he is by nature incapable.

The lyric notes and humorous features clearly noticeable in his first productions become gradually dimmer. A sorrowful lyricism, visionary inertia, an elegiac depression begin to sound louder and louder in his compositions.

From the comparatively low level of his ballets of the Eighties

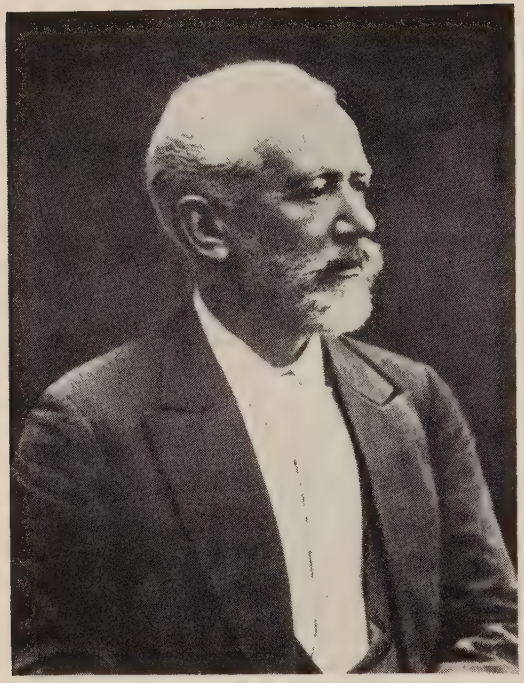
Decor by M. I. Bocharov for SWAN LAKE, Act 2, 1895
(*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

the curve of his creative power shows a rise toward 1892 (the production of *The Nutcraker*), an upward jump in 1894 (the production of Scene 2 of *Swan Lake*) (in Western European and American productions Scene 2 is called Act 2, A.C.). Ivanov remains on this level through the entire year 1895, when he creates the last scene (Act 4, A.C.) of *Swan Lake*. But right after 1895 his mastery, which had just then manifested itself in full force, drops precipitately.

The time of the greatest acuteness of perception and the era of utmost disturbance and pity about his ruined life coincides in his creative work with an unexpected outburst of creative energy. In his memoirs A(lexander) Shiriaev calls attention to a curious trait of Ivanov's character:

"It would happen that he would suddenly display such brilliant invention, such originality of construction and movement, would so strikingly and unexpectedly stage a dance for all of us, that we would be simply amazed . . ."[19]

With reference to *Swan Lake,* Shiriaev noted with perfect correctness the characteristic trait of Ivanov's talent. In this production he unexpectdly breaks with the compositional principles and artistic



Peter Ilyich Tchaikowsky (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*)

ideology of Marius Petipa, who was his tyrannical boss during several decades.

For the first and practically the last time in his life, the submissive and obedient "hack" ballet master dares to say his own word, which sounds as a decided opposition to his mentor, Petipa.

Alongside the cold compositions of Petipa of this period (compare any scene from *Sleeping Beauty* with the last scene of *Swan Lake*) the dances of the swans choreographed by Ivanov are the only examples of movement permeated with a feeling of lyricism and elegiac sadness in the Nineties.

The prettiness, the noble aloofness and emptiness of the court drawing room which are so strong in Petipa's ballets *Sleeping Beauty, Blue Beard, Raymonda,* are totally absent from the best dance episodes of *Swan Lake.*

They do not contain even a trace of stately serenity. The mises-en-scène and movements are saturated with alarm and unrest . . .

What luck for Ivanov that an accident brings into his hands the score of *Swan Lake* and that he meets a kindred and close artist.

Tchaikowsky's music, more than any other, is in harmony with Ivanov's moods. It is not his fault that he did not understand *The Nutcracker* which was fragmentary and lacking in a unified aim. The best pages of *Swan Lake* were read by Ivanov with much feeling and they called forth in him a real excitement. Such music he could interpret and embody in dance.

Petipa, in common with the other masters of ballet of the nineteenth century, did not interpret the music in the dance. Ivanov's attitude toward music was different.

Intuitively, not without mistakes on occasion from a musical point of view, hardly fully realizing it himself, he strives for a dance interpretation of the music.

Lev Ivanov is a gifted musician. Legends of his phenomenal musical aptitude, absolute pitch, exceptional mastery and pianistic potentialities, live to this day in the Leningrad ballet company.

Apparently, in these attributes one should look for the roots of his longing to interpret music, to render choreographically its soundings, stage the dance using the music as a point of departure, and not as a simple metric and illustrative accompaniment.

For Ivanov the scenario is only a spring board to call forth his own conception of the action, his own stage picture. And music colors these sketchy visions, gives them a sonorous body, imparts to them an emotional imagery and conviction. From this particular creative method of Ivanov are born the compositional peculiarities of his mastery, which have serious shortcomings alongside their excellencies. His longing to find the dance in the music makes him deaf and blind to the surroundings.

Petipa imperiously, as the author, influences the creation of the production and its component elements, among them the music. As a rule his productions are worked out and prepared before the beginning of the composition of the music. Therefore, when the scenario, the piano score, the scenery and costumes are ready, Petipa considers that he has finished the creation of the production, since the choreographed part was done before the piano score. What remains is just the manual labor of rehearsing the roles with the performers.

For Ivanov the creative process begins from the moment when the musical waves raise choreographic images in his mind. Everything that goes on before then, i.e., that which is the main thing for

Petipa, is for Ivanov only a technical necessity in which there is least of all the fire of creativeness and inspiration.

Ivanov is so indifferent to the preparatory procedures that he accepts the scenario, the scenery and costumes almost without remarks or objections. He does not influence the material of the production, for him the conception of the choreographic design takes place during the period when for Petipa everything is already finished.

That is why his productions never were qualitatively equable.

His failures conform to a certain law, and are inevitable. We might say that the more convincing the music of the ballet which he stages, the less attention Ivanov pays to the incidents of the plot, remaining at the same time the interpreter of the musical dramaturgy. Details of manners and customs, which are communicated in Petipa's language by pantomime, are done by Ivanov, in the majority of cases, in a routine manner; they are colorless and abundantly garnished with conventional ballet gesticulation.

In staging such scenes, Ivanov seems to be carrying out an obligation. He is drawn to dance expression firstly by the music and only secondly by the plot which had created the music. That which he hears in the music, that which creates in his imagination a picture based upon the musical canvas of the subject matter, that is successful.

Comparing Ivanov and Petipa, we noticed one interesting phenomenon. One can enumerate hundreds of excellent dance episodes composed by Petipa to poor musical material which perish together with the intolerably bad music. These fragments are so valuable, (e.g., numbers from *Blue Beard, La Vestale, Paquita, La Bayadère,* etc.) that one desires to save them, "transplanting" them to different music. But we could hardly name one first rate dance by Ivanov which was staged to poor music. This was organically alien to Ivanov.

While the dance of Petipa is born long before the music, the dance of Ivanov is a choreographic embodiment of the music which he had heard and felt. If the music does not sound to him, does not dance, does not cast itself into plastic forms which are close to him intonationally, the composed dance will emerge dead and tedious.

* * *

Until a few years ago Ivanov was not recognized officially as the choreographer of *Swan Lake.*

Balletomane histories of Russian choreography and word of mouth rumor ascribed the authorship of *Swan Lake* to Petipa, as-

signing to Ivanov the modest role of a tutor who assisted the famous ballet master in his work with the dancers.

Actually the factual history of the production of *Swan Lake* is but one of the episodes in the already familiar history of Ivanov's "forced labor" creations.

The success of his former work with Tchaikowsky suggests to Petipa, jointly with the conductor R(ichard) Drigo, the idea of reviving the score of *Swan Lake* which lies in the archives. The initiative, in fact, does not even come from Petipa, but is generated by the great interest in Tchaikowsky's creative works growing in social circles. In connection with this, attention is being paid, in ballet as well as in opera, to all compositions of Tchaikowsky which had not been successful earlier for one reason or another.

Petipa develops an interest in *Swan Lake* only after Scene 2 of the ballet, independently staged by Ivanov, is presented on a program of an evening devoted to the memory of Tchaikowsky, on February 17 (March 1) 1894.* "The production is a great credit to

* This is the scene which now forms the one-act version of *Swan Lake* given by most contemporary ballet companies. A.C.

Paul Gerdt as Prince Siegfried with the corps de ballet in SWAN LAKE, Act 2, 1895 (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*)

Ivanov. The adagio is a complete choreographic poem," writes the *Peterburgskaya Gazeta*[20] noting the serious artistic success of his work.

The attempt to revive *Swan Lake* proved to be very successful.

Petipa decides to profit by the success. At a repeat presentation of this scene during a gala performance (at the Imperial Theatre, A. C.), he places alongside Ivanov's name on the program his own name as choreographer and begins in earnest to work on *Swan Lake*. The ballet, extracted from the archives, is subjected to alterations in the music as well as in the scenario. These alterations lead away from Tchaikowsky, because Petipa, in compliance with the demands of the time, the tastes of the directors and the spectators, neutralizes and renders meaningless the dramatic side of the ballet.

Petipa and the conductor Drigo reshuffle the music, cut the episode of the storm, interpolate two piano compositions by Tchaikowsky, etc. Petipa, as usual, makes up a list of performers, sketches out a few mises-en-scène (the entrances and exits of the swans, the entrances of the prince and Odette), and entrusts to Ivanov the detailed development of the movements, leaving for himself only Scene 1 and most of Act 2.*

In this form the production is given in full on January 15 (27), 1895.

It is now obvious to us that the vitality of *Swan Lake* is due to Ivanov. The scenes staged by Petipa, with the exception of a few separate moments, have long since lost their poignancy, while the scenes of the swans (the second and the last scenes), (Act 2 and Act 4, A. C.), composed and staged by Ivanov, are as convincing and as strong emotionally as ever.† Ivanov and Tchaikowsky are interwoven in these scenes so closely that we may speak about the unity of a mutual musico-choreographic influence.

B(oris) V. Asafieff (Igor Glebov) in his interesting work dedicated to *Swan Lake*,[21] called the dances in the scenes of the swans "lyrico-symphonic." This is the highest praise for a ballet master.

The problem of the symphonization of the dance has not yet been solved by the ballet. To create a production in which the dance would develop during the entire length of the work in a powerful

* In the Western European versions, Act 1 and most of Act 3. A.C.

† In the Leningrad version of the ballet, in spite of the absence of Ivanov's name, his production has been preserved almost intact; in the Moscow version the principal motifs have been utilized.

SWAN LAKE, Act 4, 1895 (Per Lindberg, *Baletten Under Fyra Sekler,* Stockholm, 1943)

stream of true emotional and plastic images, similar to the way in which this is so brilliantly realized in symphonic music, this is a problem which stands before the Soviet masters of ballet.

As a rule, the dance in a ballet production has, to use a musical analogy, the form of a suite, in which the unity of design manifests itself chiefly in external moments (in the costumes of the participants, partly in the style and the technology of the choreographic episodes).

Elements of the symphonic dance in the ballet are a rare occurrence even at this time (1937, A. C.). *Giselle* (especially Act 2), the scene of the "Shades" in *La Bayadère,* and *Swan Lake*—this is probably all that the nineteenth century left us in this field. The twentieth century added to it the symphonic structure of the dance in *Chopiniana* (*Les Sylphides,* A. C.) and *Eros* (to Tchaikowsky's Serenade for Strings in C major, A. C.) by Fokine, in *The Ice-Maiden* and *Dance-Symphony* of T(heodore) Lopoukhov.

The demands made by the symphonic dance are much too complex, difficult and manifold. The lazy thinking choreographers who work for an undemanding public cannot burden themselves with

Pierina Legnani. Left, in the title role of CINDERELLA, her first Ivanov ballet, and, right, in SWAN LAKE, Act 3 (*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

attempts at solving this problem. Yet the above-mentioned examples of the symphonic dance attest with sufficient cogency to its great value and power of influence.

In the two scenes of *Swan Lake* Ivanov employs all possible expressive means for the solution of the problem. The characters of the ballet (the swan and her friends), the "leit-movements" of the dance, the construction of groups, all poses and movements, all these serve the expressive development of the lyric drama and the progress of the emotional conflicts which consolidate the basic theme of Tchaikowsky—the struggle and the destruction of the individual who seeks in the realm of love a deliverance from the closed circle of a burdensome life.

Let us remind ourselves with what choreographic means Ivanov creates the image of the swan.

The very entrance of Odette in Scene 2 contains a simple but persuasively expressed movement-motif.

The dancer touches the floor with the toe of one foot, the other leg is in the air. The body seems to be prepared for flight. The arms,

spread out to the sides, flutter like wings. The resemblance to a bird is achieved.

Another touch: the arms have fallen, reminding one of folded wings; the head, dressed in swan feathers, is dropped on the chest and moves slowly from shoulder to shoulder, thus changing the plastic design and at the same time imitating a typical head movement of a swan. This is not only an illustrative pose, but also an emotionally convincing pose of sorrow.

On these two described movements of the torso—on the theme "take-off for flight" and on the theme "sorrow" to which is added a "floating arabesque"—is built the dance-characterization of the image of Odette.

Ivanov not only created an excellent and ingenious dance characterization of the image; the general composition of the scenes is equally interesting. The dance ensemble (the decorative garland, the picturesque ornament in the compositions of the mature Petipa) in Ivanov's composition solves the problem of a Greek chorus—a symphonic expression of the themes of the spectacle: elegiac sorrow, hopelessness, grief, illusory existence. Ivanov increases by many times the force of the impression by drawing into the dance the arms and torso.

To the number of serious defects of the ballet of the second half of the nineteenth century, which were not fully overcome even by Petipa, belongs the passiveness of the arms, which were never utilized as a means to enhance the expressiveness of the dance. In their time J(ean Georges) Noverre and after him C(arlo) Blasis were crying out in vain to performers and ballet masters: "It is not enough to dance with the feet, one must dance also with the torso and arms."

In Ivanov's last scene of *Swan Lake* the full life of the wrists, forearms, torso, everything that contains the resources of the classic dance, is used for the intensification of the impression.

During the entire scene the arms and torso almost never remain indifferent to the development of the action. Now rounded over the head, now extended upward in a pose of arabesque, now falling slowly and weakly, now swaying, now folded in a motion of appeal, the arms dance, capturing the spectator, strengthening the emotions of agitation, fear, sorrow, and despair.

Notwithstanding the basic direction of the nineteenth century

ballet, which aimed to demonstrate how the dancer overcomes without difficulty and solves complicated technical problems, Ivanov builds the last scene of *Swan Lake* on different principles.

The dance is based on two movements—a simple walk and swaying (balancé). But it is not a plain every-day walk. First of all it is rhythmicized and replaces the a-rhythmic walk on the stage which is so incongruous with a choreographic performance. But it is not only rhythmicized, it is staged like a dance-walk (resembling a soft battement) in all its richest intonations. In Ivanov's composition this is not accidental. It is poetically reminiscent of the measured proud step of swans.

The corps de ballet and the ballerina move with this step, thrusting the leg forward and holding it in the air for a split second before again touching the ground with the foot. This movement shows the ballet master's design to add a funereal character to the sorrowful procession of the swans.

Here is the first dance of the swans from the last scene.*

The white swans run onto the stage in lines from both sides, forming an angle with its apex toward the spectator.† Two new lines cover the first triangle with a second triangle. In the orchestra sound the definite phrases of a call. The dancers, raising their arms in the pose of an arabesque and swaying (the first "leit-movement"), call their queen, Odette. The dance begins. The second "leit-movement" is introduced: the dancers, in lines, rush in opposite directions to each other.

When one line, dancing, moves in one direction, the other, in a "thematic" walk moves toward it. Then the second line turns about and, now dancing, rushes back, from where the first line, which earlier was dancing, now moves in a walk.

The white figures line up in a broken row from upstage toward the spectator. Now there appears from the wings a chain of black swans, who quickly slip into the intervals between the white swans and so form a straight black-and-white line. Still using the same walk, the white swans form into rows and advance toward the spectator. Then they open to the sides, revealing the black swans who move

* I describe the most vivid fragments.

† This construction is also thematic. The culminating movement of the adagio in Scene 2 concludes with a similar group.

Alexis D. Boulgakov as Rothbart, the Magician, in SWAN LAKE, 1895 (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*)

behind them. The black swans move in the same walk as their white friends but in a retarded tempo. Their walk becomes slower and slower until, in accordance with the last measures of the dying-down music, the group of black swans stops on its last drawn out step, as though throwing to the auditorium a whispered "all has ended."

The love duet in Petipa's ballets—especially its first part, adagio —usually unfolds against the background of a picturesque setting or a stationary group of dancers who do not take part in the action. The slow part of the duet consists of a skillful and varied construction of languid, retarded, circular movements, separate lifts with a concluding beautiful pose, or movements in a circle (pirouettes) in the arms of the partner.

But the adagio of Scene 2 of *Swan Lake* is constantly interrupted by movements of the corps de ballet. It is a duet with a choir. Even

The Apotheosis of SWAN LAKE, 1895 (*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

in the groupings of the corps de ballet there are sketchily indicated light movements of the arms and torsos, plastically accompanying the solo voices.

The singing character of this dance* is seen with special clarity when one analyzes the methods of utilizing the corps de ballet.

A few phrases of the duet are interrupted by the corps de ballet which, grouped in small circles, comes to life and begins a measured, swimming turning in arabesque. In this manner Ivanov introduces and transfers to the group the second leit-motif of the choreographic image of Odette—the swimming movement of the swans.

The first episode of the adagio is built upon the quiet love poses, which are composed on a melodic musical canvas.

The second episode has a different aim. On a music cue signifying flight, the partner lifts the ballerina into the air, while at the same time she throws her leg forward and upward.

After a momentary pause in the air, the ballerina is lowered

* The composition of the adagio is unusual: it is a duet with an ensemble. It is motivated entirely by the original construction of the musical number "adagio." According to the memoirs of his friends, Tchaikowsky was inspired in its composition by a vocal duet from his opera *Ondine,* the score of which he destroyed.

and begins to turn swiftly. With a sharp change of tempo and character of the movement, she creates the impression of a passionate transport and alarm.

The corps de ballet steps forward, and, repeating the motif of the arabesque, again changes the impression.

A little later in the duet, appears another expressive moment. The swans, arranged in a diagonal line, slowly repeat the familiar body position of Odette. They gradually bend their bodies and simultaneously plié. The ballerina at the same time is executing the theme of their accompaniment, moving downstage in swimming arabesques. And when the partner sharply tears the ballerina from the floor, the entire row of the corps de ballet, as if echoing them, instantly rises on toe and reaches upward still in the same pose of arabesque.

In violation of the canonical principles of the construction of a duet (usually, a duet is a number based on the effective appearance of two principals), the duet is subordinated here to thematic problems. This is most clearly noticeable in the structure of the last scene. In this scene, we will not find the conventional division of the dance into "pieces" for the soloists, corps de ballet and the ballerina.

The ballerina, in relation to whom all other participants in the performance are subordinate, the ballerina who is the purpose and the axis of the performance, this ballerina does not exist in this work of Ivanov. She is only one of the protagonists. She either participates in the dance together with other dancers, or alternates with them, or, if she executes a solo passage, the other dancers accompany her. But no one leaves the stage, no one remains indifferent during the performance of one group or another.

In *Swan Lake* Ivanov created for us a model of a perfect choreographic score from which present day ballet masters should study their profession.

Even the mises-en-scène (especially the mises-en-scène of the last scene) participate in the symphonic dance, creating throughout the performance a thematically homogeneous structure of groupings.

The designs for the mises-en-scène developed by Petipa for the last scene are successfully realized in practice by Ivanov, who, however, also invented his own mises-en-scène.

The swans moving in the form of two angles, the white straight line across the stage through which weaves the ribbon of black

swans, the wave-like advance as if in a stream of lava, rows moving one toward the other—none of this had ever been seen in the ballet of the end of the nineteenth century.

The remarkable moments in *Swan Lake* are not exhausted by those described above.

But Ivanov's production is not equal in all its parts; the same ballet also has weak spots.

Alongside such beautiful passages as the entrance of Odette, the adagio of Scene 2, the dance of the four cygnets—exceptionally witty in form and in method of the ensemble dance—we see in the same scene numbers which, with the exception of single details, do not rise above the level of a technically literate dance arrangement (such, in particular, is the coda of Scene 2).

But we have already spoken about the logic of this phenomenon in the creative power of Ivanov.

Only once during his entire inconspicuous life there escapes a wail of a man whose will-power, creative initiative and interests have been trampled on and crushed.

In his diary we find the following lines written a few years before his death: "My God, my God! How much strength there was wasted, how many feelings spent, how much blood spoiled because of a hurt ambition, because of a humiliated human dignity."[22]

Swan Lake was the last soaring of Ivanov's creative thought. Humiliations, affronts, impotence—all this robs the last strength of the artist. After 1895 begins the fast decline of his talent.

As a man he completely draws into his shell and begins to drink; as an artist he conscientiously continues to toil. He continues to stay with the theatre, stages a few performances, begins the production of Delibes' *Sylvia* with P(aul) Gerdt, and dies, leaving it unfinished, in 1901.

* * *

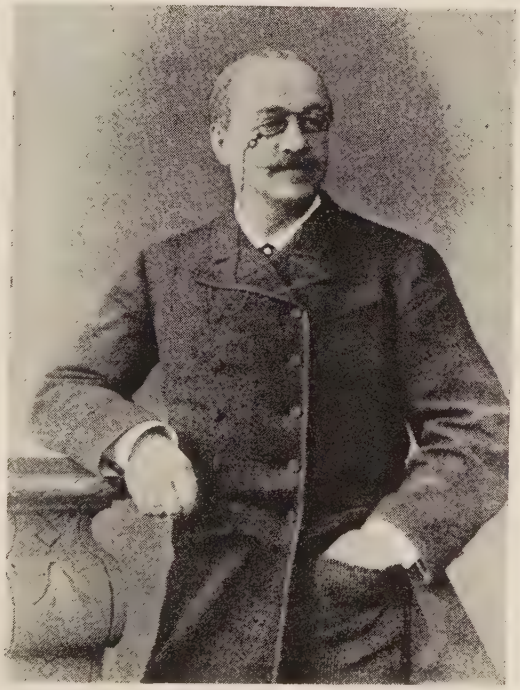
Lev Ivanov could not develop and continue the line which, although not fully, he so clearly revealed to us in *Swan Lake*. But then, even a man of different mentality could not have had the strength to do more, meeting so much opposition in his surroundings.

But the idea of saturating the dance with elegiac soundings and emotions of alarm and sorrow, those lyric intonations which pierce Ivanov's creative power, soon find their continuation. The disturbed images created by Ivanov's fantasy are the foundation of the mastery

of Michel Fokine, unhampered by Petipa's censorship, not meeting with any hostility from the new directors of the theatre, dressed by the finest contemporary designers in expressive colorful costumes, finding support in the bourgeois spectator.

The contours of the image of the swan created by Ivanov inspire Michel Fokine in 1905 to create the remarkable miniature *The Dying Swan,* staged for Anna Pavlova. From the productions of Ivanov, Fokine borrows the compositional methods of *Chopiniana, Eros* and *Spectre de la Rose.*

The contemporaries of Fokine, and he personally, have considered that in negating the "needless prettiness" of the old ballet, that in removing "the charming absurdity" of Marius Petipa (the entire past of the ballet is automatically identified with him), Fokine creates an entirely new dance, saturates it with expression and meaning foreign to the old ballet. For us it is clear that on the very basis of the "old ballet" Fokine was accomplishing the bourgeois reform of



Lev Ivanov (Collection of Anatole Chujoy)

the classic dance. This links him with the masters of the romantic ballet and with his precursor, Lev Ivanov.

From the youth of future generations Lev Ivanov expected much—an honest and sincere attitude towards the arts.

Over the heads of his contemporaries the following lines reach us, written in his diary shortly before his death:

"I should like you not to be such stone idols, I should like to breathe into you a soul and an energy, so that you should not look upon art as upon a trade, so that you will begin to love it and will hold its banner high."

NOTES ON SOURCE MATERIAL

1. From the unpublished memoir of Honorary Artist Alexander V. Shiriaev. My thanks to him for the material which throws light on Lev Ivanov.
2. From manuscript-diary of L. Ivanov placed at our disposal by L(ubov) Blok, who is preparing the manuscript for publication.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Shiriaev, op. cit.
8. Shiriaev, op. cit.
9. Archives of Petipa. File "Nutcracker." We will refer to this material on many occasions. The archives are kept in the Bakhrouchine Museum. We are unable to refer to definite numbers or pages because the material has not yet been catalogued.
10. Ibid. Outline for a scenario of "The Nutcracker."
11. Tchaikowsky, M(odest). *The Life of P. I. Tchaikowsky,* Moscow, 1902. Vol. III, p. 427.
12. Ibid. p. 437.
13. Ibid. p. 429.
14. Ibid. p. 490.
15. Ibid. p. 554.
16. Laroche, P. "Tchaikowsky as a Dramatic Composer," *Annals of the Imperial Theatres,* 1893-94. Supplement I, p. 178.
17. Skalkovsky, V. *In the Theatre World,* St. Petersburg, 1899, p. 206.
18. Ivanov, op. cit.
19. Shiriaev, op. cit.
20. *St. Petersburg Gazette,* No. 48, 1894.
21. Glebov, Igor. *Swan Lake,* State Academic Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Leningrad, 1934.
22. Ivanov, op. cit.

Music Cover of THE MAGIC FLUTE (Collection of The Tschaikovsky Foundation)

THE DAUGHTER OF MIKADO, 1897. The dancers are, left to right, Barbara Rikhliakova, Mathilda Konietzkaya, Catherine Geltzer (*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

Left, THE AWAKENING OF FLORA, 1894. Mathilda Kschessinska as Flora and Vera Trefilova as Cupid. Right, THE ENCHANTED FOREST, 1887. Claudia Koulichevskaya in the role of Ilka (*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

LIST OF BALLETS STAGED BY IVANOV IN ST. PETERSBURG

Compiled by Yury Slonimsky

(All dates of first performances given on this page are old style.)

1. Vain Precautions (La Fille Mal Gardée) in 3 acts. Music by Hertel (Dec. 15), 1885. (Production with the participation of Marius Petipa, using the mises-en-scène of Jean Dauberval)
2. The Enchanted Forest in 1 act. Music by R. Drigo. May 3, 1887.
3. The Haarlem Tulip in 3 acts. Music by Schel. Oct. 4, 1887.
4. Cupid's Pranks in 1 act. Music by Friedman. Nov. 11, 1890.
5. The Nutcracker in 2 acts. Music by Tchaikowsky. Dec. 8, 1892.
6. The Magic Flute in 1 act. Music by R. Drigo. April 11, 1893. (Scenario and stage directions of Bernadelli were used in this ballet)
7. Cinderella in 3 acts. Music by Schel. Dec. 5, 1893. (L. Ivanov staged only Act 2)
8. The Awakening of Flora in 1 act. Music by R. Drigo. July 28, 1894. (In collaboration with M. Petipa)
9. Swan Lake in 3 acts. Music by Tchaikowsky. Jan. 15, 1895. (L. Ivanov staged Scene 2 of Act 1 and Act 3)
10. Acis and Galatea in 1 act. Music by A. Kadletz. Jan. 21, 1896.
11. The Daughter of Mikado in 2 acts. Music by Wrangel. Oct. 9, 1897.
12. Sylvia (unfinished) in 3 acts. Music by Leo Delibes. 1900-1901. (In collaboration with Paul Gerdt)

Ivanov also staged ballets for the Tsar's private theatre at Krasnoe Selo such as *The Beauty of Seville* (June 29, 1888) and *Boatmen's Holiday* (July 26, 1891), but since these were only given one or two performances, and shown to a limited audience, they are not included in the above list.

Lev Ivanov

by YURY SLONIMSKY

From *P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time.* Moscow, 1956

On the poster of the first performance of *The Nutcracker* on December 6, 1892 Lev Ivanov is mentioned as the only choreographer. Actually he did not work alone. Petipa had begun rehearsals, had roughly marked out the first scene and then, because of illness, turned things over to his assistant. The outline of the production reached Ivanov at the last moment, when nothing essential could have been changed and when all Ivanov could do was carry out what was sketched by Petipa. The estimation of Lev Ivanov then current in the circle of ballet masters and theatrical functionaries was that he ranked far behind Petipa in talent, in fantasy and in taste. This opinion was undeserved but typical: failures were always blamed on the "master's assistant" while successes were credited to the "master."

Closer to the truth was Modeste Tchaikowsky (the brother of the composer, A.C.). He held that in staging the dances Ivanov executed his assignment excellently, but that the action scenes, particularly the battle of the mice and the toy soldiers, were not at all successful: "they emerged vague, dull, not amusing and uninteresting." Inasmuch as this judgment applies also to the action plan of the first scene, the blame for the failure must be shared also by Petipa.

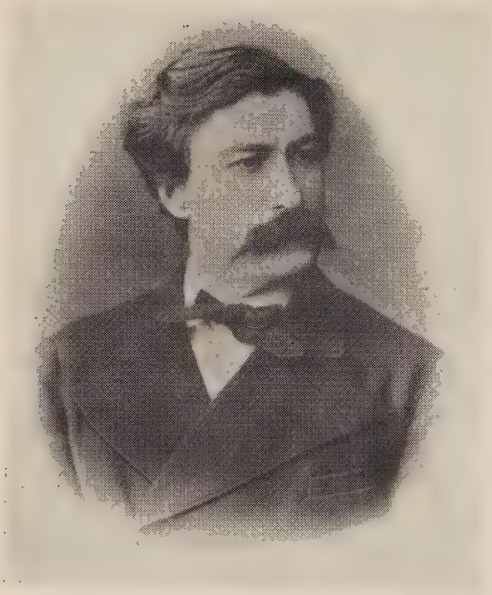
For decades Ivanov had been accustomed to working mainly on the arrangement of dances. The conception of the production of a ballet in its entirety, the sharp, pointed solution of the pantomimic pas d'action, Petipa invariably took upon himself. This part of the

production practice never became Ivanov's forte. His successes always stemmed from careful reading of the musical score of the dance episodes. In the case of *The Nutcracker,* however, he was denied the opportunity of "living" with the exceptionally complicated music, of patiently searching for the key to its correct interpretation. There was not enough scope here for his own choreographic gifts—Petipa's preparatory work bound him hand and foot.

There were episodes in the choreography of *The Nutcracker* which belonged to the level of the highest theatrical achievements of the time. The trouble was that this level could no longer fulfill the demands of the Tchaikowsky music. The contemporary choreographic practice did not have the means to delineate a realistic image in movement, if that image was composed of purely "genre" details. And lacking a psychological, inherent meaning, the external action of the first act of *The Nutcracker* appeared flat, shallow, unimportant.

One success of Ivanov must, apparently, be attributed to his classic heritage: this is the Waltz of the Snowflakes. I say "apparently" because this choreographic composition of Lev Ivanov, absent from our stages since 1924, is very dim in the memory of the participants and spectators, and it is not possible, therefore, to confirm

Olga Preobrajenska as the Sugar Plum Fairy and Nicholas Legat as the Prince in THE NUTCRACKER, 1893 [A. M. Brodsky, *Tchaikowsky on the Stage of the Kirov (formerly Maryinsky) Theatre of Opera and Ballet, 1840-1940,* Leningrad, 1941]



Sergei N. Khudekov (Collection of Elena Roslavleva)

its true significance by means of a detailed analysis. (The reader is referred to the partial description of the Waltz of the Snowflakes on pages 18-19 of this monograph.)

According to many unanimous reports in the press and stories of eye witnesses, Ivanov staged this dance with exceptional simplicity and charm. His choreography does not reflect the full contents of the music, but it clearly corresponds to one of its central ideas. Ivanov's attention was directed toward the illustrative and, at the same time, emotional reproduction of a snow storm. The movements of the dance are very simple; their variety is not great. The development of the dance vocabulary is far removed from the development of the complex symphonic structure of Tchaikowsky's waltz. But the very character of the movements, the ingenuity in the arrangement of the groups, recreated a picture of a snowfall with fluffy, soft snowflakes rushing about in the air. Ivanov utilized to excellent representational advantage the costumes and the props in the hands of the sixty-four girls who participated in this dance. There were large snowy fluffs on the full white tutus; the dancers wore headdresses with lengths of springs decorated with white snowfluffs projecting to all sides and vibrating with the dancers' movements; in their hands they held short

rods with similar springs and fluffs. During the dance, thousands of artificial snowflakes floated through the air, creating a fanciful, poetic picture of a snow storm.

At its premiere, *The Nutcracker* was presented with the one-act opera *Iolante*. In a letter to his friend and fellow-musician Yury K. Konius, dated February 5, 1893, Tchaikowsky wrote: "The success (of the premiere) was not absolute. The opera was apparently liked, the ballet less so. And actually the ballet, despite the splendor of its production, was rather boring. The newspapers, as usual, railed me cruelly." This was true. The critics were up in arms against *The Nutcracker* on all lines: music, choreography, scenario, everything (except staging) was considered unsuccessful, faulty. And this was not an accident. Tchaikowsky's score, and consequently the entire ballet production, sounded like a challenge to the prejudices and whims of the habitués of the ballet of the Imperial Theatres. The protest against the direction of the music occupied the central position in the comments of the press. The worst attacks were against the first act, not the second. It was in the first act that the breach with the canons of the ballet spectacle and the demands of the balletomanes was so evident.

"First of all *The Nutcracker* can under no condition be called a ballet," declared someone called Domino in the *Birzhevye Vedomosti* (an important St. Petersburg daily, A.C.) "The production of such 'spectacles' on our first-class stage is an insult of sorts . . . This may soon and easily lead to the ruin of the ballet troupe." Domino wrote further that the ballet caused "general indignation among the balletomanes . . . had no success with the public who found it very tiresome." Indeed the indignation of the balletomanes reached its apogee. The *Peterburgskaya Gazeta,* a daily published by the balletomane and "historian" Sergei N. Khudekov, declared: "This production is fit only for carnival-fair show-booth performances." (Mr. Khudekov's newspaper was referring to the kind of fair theatre which is depicted in *Petrouchka,* A.C.) *Novoye Vremia* (probably the most influential St. Petersburg daily of the time, A.C.) responded to the premiere with a contemptuous notice in which it ironically praised everything that should have been condemned. The notice ended with the following sentences: "I am of the opinion that the more senseless a ballet is, the more clever it is." The following day another abusive article appeared in the same newspaper. Having condemned every-

thing and especially the music, the reviewer showered praises on Mme. Del'Era, who danced the Sugar Plum Fairy. "Despite the uncomfortable and colorless music of her dance and the carelessly composed variation, Mme. Del'Era danced it splendidly . . ." V. Barkin reported in his first review in the *Peterburgskaya Gazeta* that "the balletomanes were dissatisfied with the music . . . they were not entirely wrong . . ." The following day a new notice appeared. In it the author maliciously wrote: "It was said that at the premiere only the balletomanes were bored. This time (at the second performance) there were no balletomanes present, yet *The Nutcracker* did not produce anything but boredom in the public and many spectators left before the end of the performance. . ."

What sort of a person, artistically, Del'Era was and how her participation "adorned" the performance of *The Nutcracker* can be judged from the comment of Modeste Tchaikowsky: "The heavy and unattractive Sugar Plum Fairy—Del'Era—spoiled the impression of the second act despite the perfection and grace of her technique."

After the first performance the management removed an outstanding episode—the duet of the second act. The balletomanes hailed the incident. In its place Del'Era danced a gavotte by Czibulka.*

The resumé of Constantine Skalkovsky, a balletomane and prolific writer on theatrical subjects, was terse but imposing: "In the entire ballet Del'Era danced a wholly insignificant pas de deux with Mr. Gerdt, which nevertheless gave her the opportunity to display excellent attitudes and brilliant pointes. (The "attitudes" mentioned here are probably meant as a generic term rather than the specific pose called attitude, A.C.) In general . . . for the dancers there was very little in the ballet, for art—absolutely nothing. Even the music turned out to be rather weak."

And this was the general opinion. Never before had the press devoted so much attention to a ballet production and especially to its music. Never before had it come out with such violence against the principles of a new composition, never before had it theorized about the roads of development of the ballet theatre and its music.

The success of *The Nutcracker* music among relatively wide

* "The duet of the second act" very obviously is not the pas de deux of the Sugar Plum Fairy and the Prince. What "duet" Slonimsky is referring to is not clear. Alphons Czibulka (1842-1894) was a Hungarian pianist, conductor and composer of five operettas, a number of waltzes, etc. A.C.

THE NUTCRACKER, 1892. Right, Antonietta Del'Era as the Sugar Plum Fairy (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*). Below, Barbara Nikitina, who danced the role later in the season, with Paul Gerdt as the Prince (*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

SWAN LAKE, Act 2, 1895. Paul Gerdt as Prince Siegfried and Pierina Legnani as Odette (*Annals of the Russian Imperial Theatres*)

circles of listeners long before the balletomanes of the Maryinsky Theatre were pleased to condemn it;* the dissension in the ballet company, some of whose members were beginning to understand that the Tchaikowsky ballets formed the basis of the wealth of Russian choreography and indicated its forward direction—this was what motivated the criticism by the reactionary press and the habitués of the Maryinsky Theatre. It became obvious that the practice of refusing to acknowledge the leading role of music in ballet production had ended. The meaningless musical accompaniment of the successors to Pugni-Minkus and the "enlightened" dilettantes had been left behind forever. Together with this had also been left behind the emptiness of the ballet production as a whole.

The dissatisfaction and malice of the many enemies of *The Nutcracker* and Tchaikowsky could not, of course, stay the process of

* Tchaikowsky had arranged a suite of dances from *The Nutcracker*, which had its first performance on March 7, 1892, nine months before the premiere of the ballet. A.C.

the development of the Russian ballet theatre. Following *The Nutcracker* there appeared on the stage of the Maryinsky Theatre *Swan Lake,* a ballet which, until then, was not mentioned in (St. Petersburg) polite ballet circles.

The posters of the first performance of *Swan Lake* at the Maryinsky on January 15, 1895 carried the names of two choreographers—Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. Balletomane-historiographers tried their best to prove that the production of *Swan Lake* in St. Petersburg was staged by Petipa, while the role of Ivanov was limited mainly to teaching the dancers their parts and polishing what was created by the master. Suffice it to say that Sergei N. Khudekov in Vol. IV of his *The History of Dance* pronounced Ivanov the pale shadow of Petipa, a poor copyist, etc. Actually, however, it was Lev Ivanov who revealed to the audience the lyric beauty of Tchaikowsky's music and who was first to bring the dance images close to the meaning of the music. By manifesting his spirit of innovation in the independent production of Act 2 of *Swan Lake* (at the memorial performance in honor of Tchaikowsky on February 17, 1894, A.C.), Ivanov paved the road toward the creation of the whole ballet in the same spirit.

It was very difficult to establish with clarity the division of the work of Petipa and Ivanov in the other acts. According to an account by Alexander V. Shiriaev, a dancer who participated in the premiere, the first scene (our Act 1, A.C.) was staged by Petipa, the second scene (our Act 2, A.C.) by Ivanov; the action duet of the second act (our Act 3, i.e., the so-called Black Swan pas de deux, A.C.) by Petipa; the rest of the dances in this act by both ballet masters. The notes of the conversation with Shiriaev were, regrettably, lost during the blockade of Leningrad. Constantine Skalkovsky wrote that the mazurka and the Neapolitan dance (Tarantella) were staged by Ivanov. Both ballet masters particitpated in staging the dances of the last act. Judging by its character and style, the composition of this act continues and develops the representation of the "flight" of the Swans (from Act 2), which belongs to Ivanov.

Regrettably, the archives of Lev Ivanov have not yet been found. The part of the archives of Petipa that deals with *Swan Lake* has not reached us in complete form. Available material from it, however, attests to the great amount of work done by the ballet master on the composition of all scenes except the second. Petipa's note

reads: "The second scene has already been created." This means that Petipa had accepted the Ivanov production of this scene in toto, without any corrections.

After *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker,* the tie between symphonic music and the ballet became the rule in the practice of Russian choreographers. Marius Petipa proceeded from the realization that Tchaikowsky's score was a basic component of the production. His choreographic conceptions always agreed with the music, but they did not always spring directly from the music as was the case in the compositions of Lev Ivanov. The choreographers had to eliminate from the score passages which were above the understanding of the contemporary theatre audience and, on occasion, above their own understanding. They also encountered many "traditional" obstacles in staging *Swan Lake.* We shall mention two such obstacles as illustrations.

According to the then prevailing order in the Imperial Theatres, the principal female roles in new ballets were assigned to foreign ballerina-guest artists. As a rule these ballerinas were not interested in anything but their own success; anything that did not suit the foreign "stars" was mutilated. Obviously, these "queens for a day" did not consider the essence of what was offered them and did not see the difference in principle between the music of Tchaikowsky and that of other ballet composers.

The role of Odette in *Swan Lake* was assigned to the Italian ballerina Pierina Legnani. It took persistent and painstaking work with her to create a choreographic image of Odette that would correspond to the music. It must be said to the credit of Legnani that as a result of her work on *Swan Lake* she—in the words of contemporary St. Petersburg writers—began to assimilate many of the characteristics of the Russian school of dance. Wrote Khudekov: ". . . her finest part was indubitably that of Odette . . . Here Legnani seemed to be transformed. One could not recognize the former, emotionless Legnani."*

No less complicated was the case with the dancer of the principal male role. By an unwritten law, all new works in the repertoire were assigned ot Paul A. Gerdt, who was then in his fifty-first year.

* Legnani did, however, introduce into Act 2 (our Act 3) of *Swan Lake* the same thirty-two fouettés which brought her such a triumph when she did them in *Cinderella* at her debut in 1893. A.C.

Pierina Legnani as Odette in SWAN LAKE (*P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time*)

An excellent actor and dancer, he could no longer dance in a complex scene and support the ballerina with any degree of strength. Willy-nilly choreographers were forced to adapt themselves to this circumstance, subordinating to it their compositional plans and even the music. Here is a vivid example unknown to most people. The second scene (our Act 2) of the ballet is devoted to the lyric meeting of Prince Siegfried and Odette. In its center is the celebrated pas de deux. A natural question arises: how did the limited capabilities of Gerdt conform with the special features of this pas de deux, which demanded difficult support of the ballerina? The composition of the dance was the same as it is now, but Ivanov had to introduce into it another dancer (Alexander Gorsky), who danced with and

Paul Gerdt. Caricature by Nicholas Legat

supported the ballerina where needed, while Gerdt was miming and posing. The transformation of the duet into a trio was "motivated" thus: the Prince does not part with his favorite Squire, even when declaring his love to Odette.*

In his article "Composer-Dramaturgist Peter Ilyich Tchaikowsky" (1944) Boris Asafiev (composer of the ballets *The Flames of Paris, The Fountain of Bakhchisarai, Lost Illusions, The Prisoner of the Caucasus, Christmas Eve,* et al.) called Lev Ivanov "the soul of the Russian ballet." This laconic but vivid description is true and exact. The outstanding talent of Ivanov developed under unusually unfavorable conditions, which existed in the Imperial Theatres. An excellent classic dancer, he, nevertheless, was pushed into the background. His interests as a choreographer also could not find a free

* The Squire, under the designation of "Friend" or "Benno, a Friend," still participates in the adagio of American and Western European productions of *Swan Lake*. However, Benno does not replace the Prince in any part of the adagio but only breaks the fall of Odette and lets her climb onto his knee at the end of the adagio to be lifted by the Prince. A.C.

and wide scope because of the exhausting daily grind of rehearsal duties and the poor taste of the lawgivers of the ballet.

To Lev Ivanov—the talented amateur musician with a perfect pitch and an astounding musical memory—symphonic music was the principal source of his choreographic inspiration. He raised the interrelation between choreography and music to a new level. Music determined not only the surface contours of the dance images of Ivanov but also their contents and emotional coloring. Ivanov concentrated all his strength in the sphere of the imagery of the dance. The inner flow of the action, the implied meaning of it, found an outer expression—a dance expression.

Lev Ivanov's achievements in *Swan Lake* can be understood only in the context of other significant factors in the life of the Russian ballet in the Eighties and Nineties of the last century. The new production *Swan Lake* was preceded by several successful creations of Ivanov himself, among others. He was the first to realize the production of the Polovetzian Dances in the opera *Prince Igor* by Borodin in 1890. According to eye witnesses a number of Ivanov's inventions were incorporated in later choreography of these dances, which exist to this day. (Presumably Michel Fokine's version? A.C.) In 1892 he composed several dances in the opera-ballet *Mlada* by Nicholas Rimsky-Korsakoff. As mentioned earlier, two years before the production of Act 2 of *Swan Lake* he had had to work under most unfavorable conditions on *The Nutcracker*. Already then, according to Igor Glebov, "he keenly perceived the most basic, the most valuable and the most truthful elements contained in the lyricism of Tchaikowsky."

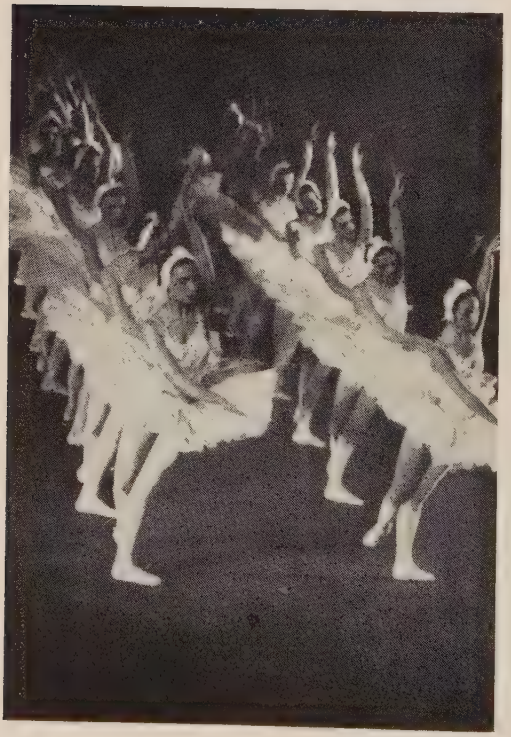
For Ivanov, Tchaikowsky became a guide and an inspiration. Conditions were more favorable for Ivanov's work on Act 2 of *Swan Lake*. Evidently he had been working for a long time on this act and had had enough time to search for the dance images prompted by the music. More than the others, Act 2 harmonized with the special traits of Ivanov's talent. The story of first love was embodied here not in dramatic, pantomimic scenes, which had always been the weak spots of Ivanov's compositional practice, but in pure-dance situations. What was of the utmost difficulty for other ballet masters was natural and easy for Ivanov, especially when he dealt with the music of Tchaikowsky.

The dances of the Swans, composed by Ivanov, differ in prin-

ciple from the compositions in the classic dance of other choreographers. Their luminously sorrowful tonality was created by Tchaikowsky. The alarm and apprehension, which sound in the dances of the last scene (our Act 4, A.C.), distinguish them from the dances of the Swans in Act 2, dances full of calm and confidence.

Lev Ivanov is creatively close to Tchaikowsky. The two artists were drawn together by their democratic thinking, their enmity toward the doll-like prettiness in art, their desire to immortalize in their creations the feelings and thoughts of men. Ivanov brilliantly embodied his cherished wishes in the choreography of *Swan Lake* and reached in this work the zenith of his creative power.

The radiant renascence of *Swan Lake* passed by the balletomanes and their representatives in the press without their realizing its greatness. *Swan Lake* had no success among them, and they wrote triumphantly about it in the St. Petersburg newspapers. "The most important defect of the ballet," wrote someone in the *Peterburgsky*



Left and opposite, SWAN LAKE as performed by the Ballet of the Stanislavsky Theatre of Moscow at the Chatelet Theatre, Paris, July, 1956 (Photographs by Dr. H. v. Kuffner)

Listok (a tabloid-class daily, A.C.), "is its music . . . In places the music actually interferes with the ballet." Of the 182 lines of a long article in *Peterburgskaya Gazeta,* written by its music critic Baskin, only two unbelievable lines are devoted to Tchaikowsky's score: "The weakest part of *Swan Lake* is the music of the ballet. Waltzes predominate in it." *Novoye Vremia* expressed itself in a similar tone. The balletomanes remained true to themselves.

It is surprising, however, that even the *Russkaya Muzikalnaya Gazeta* (Russian Musical Gazette) (an important, serious publication, A.C.) agreed with their point of view. The Gazette blamed Tchaikowsky for his "ordinary" music because of which the ballet did not please those who appreciated art. "The music bores because of its meaninglessness and banality . . . The ballet will evidently not remain in the repertoire."—this was the conclusion of the reviewer of *Russkaya Muzikalnaya Gazeta.* And this was the refrain of the balletomane verdict rendered by *Peterburgsky Listok*: "On the whole, judging by its limited success last night, *Swan Lake* will hardly become a repertoire ballet, and no one will regret it."

However, the "judges" of the ballet turned out to be powerless before the facts: the "limited" success registered at the premiere changed into a triumph before the "ordinary" public of the Maryinsky Theatre.

Concluding Remarks by the Translator

It is probably quite unnecessary to add that *Swan Lake* is the most successful ballet of all times and in all places. And this is true whether it is presented in full, as by the Royal Ballet (British), the Royal Swedish Ballet, the Moscow Bolshoi, Moscow Filial and Moscow Stanislavsky Theatres, the Leningrad Kirov Theatre, as well as in Riga, Odessa, Kiev, Tbilisi and probably other cities of the Soviet Union; or given in the one act version, as in the United States and most Western and Central European countries and in South America. The popular success of *Swan Lake* must be attributed to many factors: the romantic story; the great choreography, mainly, of course, that of Lev Ivanov—which remains great despite the untold liberties taken with it by contemporary ballet masters; and Tchaikowsky's unforgettable score, made familiar by the many and excellent recordings as well as by the performances themselves. Its intrinsic choreographic and musical values make it the perfect example of classic ballet—of classic ballet, incidentally, not as it actually existed during the last half of the nineteenth century, but as it could have been had it then been considered, more an art form and less a simple entertainment.

My work on the translation of Yury Slonimsky's monograph on Ivanov in his *Masters of the Ballet,* the basic part of this article, and the work of selecting material for the additional information on Lev Ivanov's personality, talent and method of work, from Slonimsky's book *P. I. Tchaikowsky and the Ballet Theatre of His Time,* have strengthened my earlier conclusion that Ivanov was a great choreographer. He could have been still greater had he been able or willing to assert himself in the unfavorable and often stifling atmosphere of the Imperial Theatres of his time and under the constant pressure exerted on the directors of the Theatres by highly placed balletomanes, from grand dukes down to representatives of the minor aristocracy and major merchant class, as well as by newspaper editors, writers, critics et al., all of whom had an axe to grind.

The material here assembled neglects to mention one very important fact. From the point of view of the Russian Imperial Theatres, Lev Ivanov possessed the inexcusable defect of being a Russian

rather than a Frenchman, Italian or Swede. During the period of his activity, a Russian choreographer, like a Russian prima ballerina, was not a common occurrence and the directors of the Imperial Theatres as well as the Russian balletomanes, with a few exceptions, had a professed doubt about the possibility of their existence.

It was not until 1895 that Mathilda Kchessinska, a Russian dancer with the highest possible connections at the Imperial Court, was accorded the status of prima ballerina, a position hitherto enjoyed only by foreign ballerinas, mediocre though they may have been. Ivanov did not enjoy such connections.

Some thirty years before the St. Petersburg version of *Swan Lake* was presented, the directors of the Imperial Theatres decided to produce a ballet on a Russian theme and selected the folk-tale *The Humpbacked Horse* as its basis. The Frenchman Arthur Saint-Léon was assigned to write the libretto and stage the ballet and the Italian Cesare Pugni was given the task of composing the music. The directors did not think that there existed a Russian choreographer and composer able to create the work.

The ensuing thirty years brought little change in the attitude of the Imperial Theatres toward Russian artists. It was the emergence of such artists as Mathilda Kchessinska, Olga Preobrajenska, Lubov Egorova, Anna Pavlova, Michel Fokine, Tamara Karsavina, Vaslav Nijinsky, Adolph Bolm and those who followed them that forced the directors of the Imperial Theatres to realize where the artistic wealth of Russian ballet lay. By then, however, a certain dilettante—who was also a genius—became visible on the ballet horizon, and the Imperial Ballet never recovered. His name was Serge Diaghilev.

Soviet stamp issued in honor of Tchaikowsky, showing a scene from SWAN LAKE (Collection of Anatole Chujoy)

Anna Pavolva with Alexander Volinine, Hilda Butsova and Linda Lindowska in THE AWAKENING OF FLORA, 1922
(Constance Paget-Fredericks Memorial Collection)

PRODUCTIONS OF IVANOV BALLETS IN NEW YORK

THE AWAKENING OF FLORA

Date of First Performance	*Company*	*Theatre*	*Choreography Credited To*	*Principal Dancers*
1914, Nov. 3	Anna Pavlova	Metropolitan Opera House	Ivan Clustine	Anna Pavlova and Alexander Volinine

THE MAGIC FLUTE

1913, Nov. 3	Anna Pavlova	Metropolitan Opera House	Petipa[1]	Anna Pavlova, Laurent Novikoff and Enrico Cecchetti

1. According to the souvenir program for the 1913-14 Tour, this ballet was "arranged by Marius Petipa, late head of the Imperial Russian Ballet System."

Hilda Butsova and Alexander Volinine in the Pavlova production of THE MAGIC FLUTE, 1925 (Collection of Hilda Butsova)

THE NUTCRACKER[1]

Date of First Performance	*Company*	*Theatre*	*Choreography Credited To*	*Principal Dancers*
1915, Oct. 27	Anna Pavlova	Manhattan Opera House	Ivan Clustine[2]	Anna Pavlova and Alexander Volinine
1940, Oct. 17	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo	Fifty-First St. Theatre	Alexandra Fedorova	Alicia Markova and André Eglevsky
1952, Mar. 25	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	Warner Theatre	Frederick Ashton[3]	Elaine Fifield and David Blair
1954, Feb. 2	New York City Ballet	New York City Center	George Balanchine	Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes
1956, Feb. 18	National Ballet of Canada	Brooklyn Academy of Music	Celia Franca[4]	Lois Smith and David Adams

1. The San Francisco Ballet added *The Nutcracker* to its repertory in 1943, with choreography by Willam Christensen, and a new production on December 18, 1954, with choreography by Lew Christensen, and danced by Nancy Johnson and Gordon Paxman. Festival Ballet presented Anton Dolin's production of *The Nutcracker* (prologue choreography by Nicolas Beriosoff) during its American Tour in 1954-55, but only the pas de deux was seen on Feb. 20, 1955 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. This ballet has become a favorite of regional ballets in the United States, as evidenced by Doris Hering's article "The Nutcracker" in *Dance Magazine,* December 1958.

2. This ballet was titled *Snowflakes* in the Pavlova repertory. Mme. Hilda Butsova, who danced in this production, recalls that the ballet consisted of the Snowflakes Scene from *The Nutcracker*; the pas de deux, including the man's variation and the Sugar Plum variation, but not the coda; Dance of the Mirlitons; and the Dance of the Little Swans from *Swan Lake* (done as a pas de trois).

3. The souvenir program for the 1951-52 Tour of the United States and Canada states: "Restaged especially for this company as a ballet divertissement by Frederick Ashton, *The Nutcracker* is presented in two scenes. The main feature of the Kingdom of Snow is the famous waltz of the snow flakes to which Ashton has added a pas-de-deux for the Snow Prince and Princess . . . also includes a new treatment of the famous Valse de Fleurs . . . Ashton has remounted the final dance on the original finale music."

4. P. W. Manchester in her review of this performance in *Dance News,* March 1956, mentions, "Celia Franca has incorporated into the score some of Tchaikovsky's The Months . . ."

SWAN LAKE[1] (All productions are the one act version, unless otherwise stated.)

1911, Dec. 19	All-Star Imperial Russian Ballet	Metropolitan Opera House	Mikhail Mordkin[2] 4 Acts	Catherine Geltzer and Mikhail Mordkin
1934, Mar. 9	Col. W. de Basil's Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo	St. James Theatre	"after Petipa"	Alexandra Danilova and David Lichine
1938, Oct. 15	Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo	Metropolitan Opera House	"after Petipa"[3]	Alexandra Danilova and Michel Panaieff
1938, Nov. 10	Mordkin Ballet	Alvin Theatre	Mikhail Mordkin[4]	Patricia Bowman and Leon Varkas

1. Productions of *Swan Lake* not seen in New York include that of the Chicago Civic Opera in 1930 by Laurent Novikoff, with Ruth Pryor. The San Francisco Ballet presented the full four acts for the first time on September 27, 1940, with choreography by Willam Christensen, and Janet Reed and Lew Christensen as principal dancers. The one act version has entered the repertories of regional ballet companies such as the Miami Ballet, Birmingham Civic Ballet, etc. In addition, Act III was performed separately by the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo on October 13, 1941 in a version by Alexandra Fedorova called *The Magic Swan*. It was also staged by Willam Christensen for the San Francisco Ballet under the title *Prince Siegfried*.

2. According to the souvenir program for this season "Mr. Mordkin has taken certain liberties condensing the acts to comply with American conceptions of stagecraft."

3. Anatole Chujoy in his review of the season in *Dance*, December 1938, notes, "*The Swan Lake* was given in an augmented form, with a pas de deux and variations that have not been seen in America before."

4. The New Mordkin Ballet souvenir program for the 1938-39 season describes this production as follows: "In the present version Mr. Mordkin has let himself, for the first time among choreographers, be guided by the music rather than by the old libretto . . . The mood of the music has suggested to Mr. Mordkin the eternal creative man grasping for, and never quite attaining, his ideal . . . Never, however, can he feel that he has really possessed the ideal. It is interesting to note in this connection that the music of Tschaikowsky is that of search and yearning, never that of attainment—and Mr. Mordkin has had in his thoughts continually while moulding this little ballet the true story of Tschaikowsky and Nadejda von Meck, the composer and the widowed baroness who loved and courted with thousands of letters over a period of thirty years yet never once met."

SWAN LAKE. Act 2, with Galina Ulanova and Constantin Sergeyev. STARS OF THE RUSSIAN BALLET, filmed in Leningrad, 1953

Date of First Performance	*Company*	*Theatre*	*Choreography Credited To*	*Principal Dancers*
1940, Jan. 16	Ballet Theatre	Center Theatre	Anton Dolin[5]	Patricia Bowman and Anton Dolin
1940, Nov. 23	Original Ballet Russe	Firty-First St. Theatre	"after M. Petipa"	Vera Nemtchinova and Michel Panaieff
1944, Feb. 22	La Meri	Ethnologic Theatre	La Meri[6]	La Meri and Aldo Cadena
1944, Oct. 31	International Ballet	International Theatre	Anatole Vilzak[7]	Viola Essen and André Eglevsky
1949, Oct. 20	Sadler's Wells Ballet	Metropolitan Opera House	Nicolai Sergueeff 4 Acts	Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes
1950, Nov. 8	Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas	Century Theatre	Petipa and Ivanov	Rosella Hightower and André Eglevsky
1951, Nov. 20	New York City Ballet	New York City Center	George Balanchine[8]	Maria Tallchief and Nicholas Magallanes
1952, Mar. 28	Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet	Warner Theatre	Nicolai Sergueeff	Elaine Fifield and David Poole

5. The souvenir program for the 1940 season states: "This One Act version follows faithfully the reconstructed scene as staged by Serge Diaghilev for Anton Dolin, in 1924. The Pas de Trois, which is so often seen in this act, belongs to the Prologue and has no real place in this romantic scene, its presence making the ballet a series of divertissements instead of a connected scene."

6. The program states: "Translated by La Meri into the dance-idiom of India after choreography of Marius Petipa."

7. Rosalyn Krokover notes in *The New Borzoi Book of Ballets* that this production "offered a version of Tchaikovsky's score orchestrated by Guiseppe Creatore."

8. The souvenir program for this season mentions that "Balanchine has kept the general broad patterns of Ivanov, but he has transformed the whole work into a modern commentary on a classic masterpiece, heightening the theatrical tension by an increased brilliance."

Date of First Performance	*Company*	*Theatre*	*Choreography Credited To*	*Principal Dancers*
1953, Sept. 11	Sadler's Wells Ballet	Metropolitan Opera House	Ninette de Valois[9] 4 Acts	Margot Fonteyn and Michael Somes
1955, Feb. 19	Festival Ballet	Brooklyn Academy of Music	Petipa and Ivanov	Tamara Toumanova and Nicolai Polajenko
1955, Mar. 25	National Ballet of Canada	Brooklyn Academy of Music	M. Petipa and L. Ivanov[10] 4 Acts	Lois Smith and David Adams

9. Souvenir program lists: "Present production revised by Ninette de Valois. Choroeography for the Pas de Six in Act I and the Neapolitan Dance in Act II (sic) by Frederick Ashton."

10. "This production is based almost entirely on the Sadler's Wells version as it was before its last revision." Fraser Macdonald in *Dance News,* March 1955.

DANCE PERSPECTIVES 3
DANCES OF ANATOLIAN TURKEY
by Metin And
To be published in June